



## COMMITTEE STATEMENT

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**Opening Statement of Rep. Lisa McClain (R-MI), Member  
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services Joint Hearing:  
"Phasing Out Subminimum Wages: Supporting the Transition to Competitive  
Integrated Employment for Workers with Disabilities"  
July 21, 2021**

(As prepared for delivery)

"My friend Representative Keller said it best. Work, by its very nature, is dignifying and important for all individuals. Our job is to help as many people as possible pursue pathways to success. As Representative Keller stated, a DOL 14(c) certificate offers individuals with disabilities a chance to contribute in the workforce, engage with other workers, and develop new skills.

We must honor and uphold this flexibility.

Sadly, it appears the Democrats' good intentions would result in misguided public policy. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is tragically high already. H.R. 2373 strips workers' self-worth by eliminating job opportunities.

Employers with 14(c) certificates are not artificially keeping paychecks low; they are giving individuals an opportunity to contribute where no opportunity existed. By advocating for the elimination of the 14(c) program, Democrats are effectively turning their backs on some of our nation's most vulnerable workers. One-size-fits-all D.C. mandates are rarely effective. This proposal is no different.

To try and reduce the inevitable fallout, the bill authorizes \$300 million in taxpayer-funded competitive grants to affected states and businesses. Throwing taxpayer dollars at states and a handful of employers will not make up for lost job opportunities. The legislation's phasing out of 14(c), combined with Democrats' efforts to double the national minimum wage, will force these employers to

downsize. Unfortunately, tens of thousands of laid-off individuals will have no hope of finding meaningful employment opportunities, and they will lose the important benefits of having a job.

My friends across the aisle claim the existing system segregates people with disabilities and is detrimental to everybody's interests. This cheap rhetoric misstates the reality. As Dr. Putts describes in his testimony, there are legitimate instances when the 14(c) environment is appropriate. Differently situated workers may want different work environments. We must respect workers' choices.

Presumably, Democrats called this hearing because they want to help. H.R. 2373 is not the solution Democrats claim it to be. We should carefully weigh the evidence before eliminating a meaningful and successful program.

Thank you and I yield back."

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